On any one of these propositions being brought under its notice, it pronounces a decision regarding it, and the language in which we express the decision is, " It is true," or, " It is false," Now, in pronouncing this decision, the mind proceeds on its own laws or principles—principles which are fundamental, and as incapable of analysis as the simple elements to which chemistry at last conducts us in the analysis of corporeal substances.

It is a favourite doctrine of Aristotle, the great analyst of the reasoning process, that everything cannot be demonstrated, and that the beginning of demonstration must be intuition.* All reasoning carries us back to certain first principles. In saying so, we mean that in the analysis of it we are conducted at last to truths which admit of no demonstration. Properly speaking, reasoning does not carry us back to these axiomatic truths—it proceeds upon them. These principles have at no time a separate existence as notions in the mind, at least until it begin to form reflex metaphysical abstractions. The conception of them is one of the most refined and difficult exercises in which the mind can engage, and the correct expression of them one of the most arduous works about which human language can be employed. The reason proceeds on these axiomatic principles, just as the eye sees by means of rays of light; and neither takes cognizance of the media needful for its exercise. It is by a reflex act of the mind, and that a very subtle one, that the philosopher is led to discover what is the nature of the fundamental principles imposed upon, or rather forming part of, the very faculties of the human mind. They are roots or radicals supporting all visible truth, but themselves unseen, and only to be discovered by artificially digging into the depths which they penetrate, and which cover them from the view.

All modern philosophers of authority have acknowledged that there are such fundamental principles. Locke

denied them in theory, but confessed their existence in fact under the name of intuitions. With Kant they are forms of sense, categories of understanding, and ideas of pure reason. Eeid calls them tie " principles of the *communis sensus* " very unhappily translated by a name usually differently applied—common sense. Stewart denominates them the "laws of human thought or belief/' Brown speaks of them as the primary universal intuitions oi

* See Post. Anal, **B.** i. ch. **iii.**, **£c.**